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U. S. Department of Agriculture

MAY WEATHER REVIEW

A radio talk by J. B. Kincer, Weather Bureau, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, Wednesday, June 7, 1933, broadcast by a network of 48 associate NBC radio stations.

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Temperatures during the month of May were decidedly in contrast between the more eastern and the more western sections of the country. In general, the eastern half of the United States had a comparatively mild month, while west of the Rocky Mountains, decidedly low temperatures were the rule. In the Central and Eastern States no unusually cold weather occurred during May; the minima for the month did not reach the freezing point, except in the more northern districts. The lowest reported at first-order Weather Bureau stations was 24° at Modena, Utah, and 25° at Lander, Wyo. Likewise no previously high temperature records for May were broken, although Port Arthur, Tex., with 92° and Rapid City, S. Dak., with 94°, equaled their previous highs.

The temperature for the entire month averaged from 4° to about 6° above normal throughout the Southern States, and 3° to 5° above in the central Appalachian Mountains and middle Atlantic area. In the Great Plains, the central and upper Mississippi Valley, the Lake region, and western Ohio Valley, the monthly means were slightly above normal. In the Great Basin of the West the month was 3° to 5° cooler than usual.

Rainfall was above normal over the greater portion of the country, though a few areas were decidedly dry. The outstanding moisture feature was the heavy to excessive rains over most of the interior valley States, especially those comprising the central Mississippi and Ohio Valleys. In these sections the monthly totals at many places ranged from one and one-half to more than twice the normal; like conditions occurred in some sections of the middle Atlantic area. On the other hand, the Southeast was decidedly dry, and rainfall was markedly deficient over a considerable area of the Southwest. Heavy snows occurred in the central Rocky Mountains, Lander, Wyo., reporting nearly 30 inches for the month. Parts of Wyoming had the heaviest snowfall of record for May.

There have been two outstanding features of weather during the past month affecting agriculture. One was the persistent and almost daily rainfall over the middle Mississippi, Ohio and Potomac Valley States which seriously delayed farm work, especially the planting of corn. The other was the extreme heat in the middle West during the last few days that has adversely affected small grain crops from South Dakota Southward to Oklahoma.

However, in the eastern Corn Belt, the change to fair, warm weather during this last week was decidedly helpful, and planting was pushed to the limit, night work being resorted to in many places; the bulk of the corn crop is now in. The warmth was favorable and germination is rapid, but the crop is late in most areas, increasing the danger of fall frost. In Iowa only 15 to 25 percent of corn remains to be planted in the persistently wet southeastern portion of the State; seeding is completed elsewhere, but the later-planted in the central and western parts is lying in dry soil ungerminated. Corn needs rain also in eastern Nebraska, but in

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other parts of the western belt present conditions are mostly satisfactory.

An outstanding important feature of more recent weather as affecting small grain crops was the advent of extremely high temperatures over the Great Plains area. The intense heat, together with an abnormal amount of sunshine and no rain, caused considerable damage to winter wheat, oats, rye, and barley from eastern South Dakota southward. In Kansas the high temperatures, coming at a critical period in wheat development, were decidedly harmful; last Monday the highest June temperatures of record occurred in some southern portions of the State; and many stations in the western wheat belt report yesterdays temperatures ranging from 100° to 106°; the crop is headed short, and, in the central and southeastern counties, is ripening prematurely; harvest has begun in some south-central sections of Kansas. There is also premature ripening in Oklahoma, because of the heat. In Missouri and the Ohio Valley progress and condition of winter wheat continue mostly fair to very good, except in local areas previously flooded. Elsewhere in the East wheat remains generally good, and is heading northward to New York and Wisconsin; harvest continues in the Southeast and has extended northward to North Carolina.

Except in South Dakota, the weather has been favorable for growth of spring wheat, with progress and condition of the crop mostly good to excellent. In South Dakota all crops are doing well in most of the western part, but in the east hot, dry weather caused serious damage. In the Pacific Northwest most spring grains are doing well, with early wheat heading.

The weather during the months of May and June has a decided influence on the yield of spring wheat. This is a cool weather crop, requiring for best results that these months be comparatively cool and moist. In North Dakota for example, during the past 20 years, the rainfall for May and June combined was above normal 10 times and 7 of these 10 years had above average yields, while for the other 10 years, with rainfall below normal, the yields were below normal 8 times. In North Dakota May this year had mostly above normal rainfall and slightly above normal temperatures. In general the month was favorable for the spring wheat crop in most principal producing areas.

Recent moderate temperatures and much sunshine in the South have made good cotton weather. In Texas, the crop shows improvement and is now good to excellent and well cultivated, except in some north-central districts where fields are still weedy. In Oklahoma stands are mostly satisfactory, while good to excellent progress is reported in most localities of the central States of the belt. In eastern sections growth is rather generally good. Early plants are blooming in southern portions of the belt.